

University of Wollongong

## Research Online

---

Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) - Papers      Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

---

26-9-2006

### Heritage and regional development: an indigenous perspective

Robbie Collins

*University of Wollongong*, [robbie@uow.edu.au](mailto:robbie@uow.edu.au)

K. McMahon-Coleman

*University of Wollongong*, [kmc@uow.edu.au](mailto:kmc@uow.edu.au)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Collins, Robbie and McMahon-Coleman, K.: Heritage and regional development: an indigenous perspective 2006.

<https://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/50>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: [research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

---

## Heritage and regional development: an indigenous perspective

### Abstract

Heritage is important to regional development in terms of promoting a sense of place and a sense of identity for those in the region. Heritage is often expressed through culture and the arts as a means of manifesting a community's sense of what the community or region is about. For Indigenous communities this is particularly relevant given the lack of social capital as a result of colonialism and displacement. In these communities the value of the Indigenous way of viewing things and sense of place has been subjugated by hegemonic norms. There is a need for Indigenous peoples to find means to retrieve their ways of doing and thinking so they can negotiate a space between their traditional world and the world of the colonisers. The tension between the two worlds is part of the problem for regional development. Yet it is possible that in addition to finding a way for a people to survive into the future, drivers for development possibly of use to both worlds may be revealed. Indeed, as Piner and Paradis (2004:81) suggest, "sustainable development is a holistic system in which three interdependent subsystems interact and influence one another: those of environment, culture and economies". The focus in this paper is on culture, but the frame of paper includes awareness that these subsystems are interdependent. This paper seeks to explore the interrelationship between an individual's sense of cultural heritage, the creative ways in which this identity is demonstrated, and the impact that this may have on the region with which the individual identifies. It uses the experience of an Inuit artist, writer, cartoonist and activist to explore the process of walking between the two worlds, and demonstrates that his development as an artist paralleled his people's development of their homeland. It also suggests that ultimately ownership of the process is a quintessential element in Indigenous development and that without the impetus that motivates development, little will occur. It proposes that art and artistic endeavour is significant in this process. Rather than seeking to be a definitive analysis of Indigenous perspectives on heritage, this paper explores the boundaries of regional science theory.

### Keywords

heritage, post-colonialism, culture, art, artist, development, community, region, indigenous, Inuit, regional science theory

### Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Social and Behavioral Sciences

### Publication Details

This conference paper was originally published as: Collins, R & McMahon-Coleman, K, Heritage and regional development: an indigenous perspective, in Heritage and Regional Development Refereed Proceedings of the 30th Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Association International, Beechworth, Victoria, 26-29 September 2006. Proceedings Copyright © ANZRSIA 2006. Individual chapters © the authors 2006. The conference website is available [here](#).

**“Heritage and Regional Development: An Indigenous Perspective”**

*In Heritage and Regional Development* REFEREED PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE 30th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW  
ZEALAND REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL  
BEECHWORTH, VICTORIA, 26 – 29 SEPTEMBER 2006 EDITED BY  
JOHN MARTIN, CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL  
COMMUNITIES, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY, BEECHWORTH, VICTORIA  
Published in Wollongong, Australia by:

School of Economics  
University of Wollongong  
NSW 2522

Email: [annh@uow.edu.au](mailto:annh@uow.edu.au)

Conference website: <http://www.anzrsai.org>

ISBN 978-1-74128-128-6

Copyright © ANZRS AI 2006

Individual chapters © the authors 2006

## **ABSTRACT**

### ***Heritage and Regional Development: An Indigenous Perspective***

Heritage is important to regional development in terms of promoting a sense of place and a sense of identity for those in the region. Heritage is often expressed through culture and the arts as a means of manifesting a community's sense of what the community or region is about. For Indigenous communities this is particularly relevant given the lack of social capital as a result of colonialism and displacement. In these communities the value of the Indigenous way of viewing things and sense of place has been subjugated by hegemonic norms.

There is a need for Indigenous peoples to find means to retrieve their ways of doing and thinking so they can negotiate a space between their traditional world and the world of the colonisers. The tension between the two worlds is part of the problem for regional development. Yet it is possible that in addition to finding a way for a people to survive into the future, drivers for development possibly of use to both worlds may be revealed. Indeed, as Piner and Paradis (2004:81) suggest, "sustainable development is a holistic system in which three interdependent subsystems interact and influence one another: those of environment, culture and economies". The focus in this paper is on culture, but the frame of paper includes awareness that these subsystems are interdependent.

This paper seeks to explore the interrelationship between an individual's sense of cultural heritage, the creative ways in which this identity is demonstrated, and the impact that this may have on the region with which the individual identifies. It uses the experience of an Inuit artist, writer, cartoonist and activist to explore the process of walking between the two worlds, and demonstrates that his development as an artist paralleled his people's development of their homeland. It also suggests that ultimately ownership of the process is a quintessential element in Indigenous development and that without the impetus that motivates development, little will occur. It proposes that art and artistic endeavour is significant in this process. Rather than seeking to be a definitive analysis of Indigenous perspectives on heritage, this paper explores the boundaries of regional science theory.

## Introduction

The theme of this year's 2006 ANZRAI conference asserts the "place of natural, built and cultural heritage in Australian society ... as a major driver of regional development in cities and towns across the nation." It goes on to argue that domestic and international visitors "are drawn to the heritage of place to satisfy their curiosity about how these places came to be; who were the people involved, what industry did they develop, how did they impact their environment and what legacy did they leave for us to experience today?" Yet for First Peoples in colonised lands, experience of heritage is one of devaluation and dispossession. Indigenous legacies and impact on the environment continue to be marginalised by the colonial gaze. For Indigenous peoples, a history of government-endorsed policies of removal from traditional lands and families has meant that historical links with place have been broken, and some aspects of cultural heritage have been lost. If the introductory words are to become relevant when considering Indigenous heritage and regional development, then we must explore the needs of Indigenous people to value their cultural heritage and to redefine their sense of identity.

The aim of the paper is to create an Indigenous heritage perspective in regional science literature by consciously exploring a lacuna in regional science theory. At the ANZRAI Conference 2004, Professor Blakely challenged regional scientists to use their "ideal position to forge ... [the separate disciplines informing regional science] into a disciplinary understanding that operates across disciplines". Collins, one of the authors of the current paper, has suggested that the forces of "regional innovation are necessarily viewed as interdependent components" (2005:1). This paper continues that thematic in the work of Collins in seeking inter-disciplinary understandings that inspire new perspectives in regional science. In the case of indigenous heritage there is practice funded as a result of government policy and room for insights across disciplines informing indigenous issues and policy which guides development initiatives for indigenous peoples.

The alliance of McMahon-Coleman and Collins was opportune as McMahon-Coleman's research and working relationship with an Indigenous artist and activist meant that her postcolonial analysis provided a frame to consider heritage and regional development in Nunavut, Canada. Both writers of this paper are non-Indigenous, and have no wish to replicate colonial practices by dictating or defining the role of Indigenous stakeholders in regional development. Rather, this paper

seeks to prompt dialogue about the recognition and reclamation of Indigenous heritage through culture and artistic endeavour, and the impact these may have as drivers of regional development.

We explore in this paper the expression of heritage through culture and in particular, artistic endeavour. The United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization [UNESCO](#) (2002) describes culture as follows:

... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. ... [And also that] culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Clearly then, artistic endeavour is not the only indicator of culture. However, we believe artistic endeavour influences and reflects the culture of a region or group. Heritage is “that which has been or may be inherited” (Shorter Oxford Dictionary 1973). In this paper we understand heritage to be a manifestation of a community’s sense of who and what the community or region is about, over time, in the present, and into the future. Whilst there is clearly a sense of history involved, it is history that goes beyond particular events and things to a sense of who, how and why these things are expressed in a certain way. Without a sense of ownership, pride and power to control the future, there is little that motivates development. Culture and artistic endeavour are intricately involved in fostering this sense of ownership and of belonging.

The Indigenous experience in regional development is often a marginalised experience in the sense that the Indigenous culture is not valued by the mainstream, colonising culture. In response, Indigenous people hear a consistent message that their own culture is inferior or archaic. We believe that many of the social problems faced by Indigenous communities today are directly attributable to this privileging of the dominant culture. For example in Canada, suicide and alcohol and substance abuse rates are higher per capita in the Arctic than elsewhere in Canada, and Inuit artist and activist Alootook Ipellie argues that “It’s happening because there’s [sic] no opportunities” (McMahon-Coleman, 2005a). Inuit filmmaker Elisapie Isaac (2003) concurs, citing her grandfather’s advice that “to avoid getting lost, [one must] keep an eye on where you’re coming from”.

Where the Indigenous experience—or where they are coming from—is explored and valued and the challenges addressed, there is potential of success for both the Indigenous peoples and for wider society. This is very much a process of learning to value different ways of looking at the world and using the synergy that can come from both perspectives. In this paper, we will be exploring these ideas through a study of the ways in which art, culture and regional development have worked together as part of the regional development of the space of Nunavut, a “homeland” for Eastern Arctic Inuit, which is located within the nation-state of Canada. In particular, we will be exploring the work of the Inuit artist, writer and activist Alootook Ipellie as an example to demonstrate how much this recent cultural resurgence forms a theme in the work of an Indigenous artist. We suggest that the work is a voice for his people as well as a reflection of the experience through the mirror of his work. We believe such expression of culture and heritage needs fostering to empower Indigenous people in development processes facilitated through government policy and its implementation.

### **Indigenous people reclaiming their place in the world**

To provide an Indigenous perspective on heritage and regional development and to engage Indigenous heritage as a positive force for development, there must first be a sense of the value of identity for the Indigenous people. Without some sense of self, some sense of being part of a place, the Indigenous people remain outside the process of development. Such reclamation is separate from but works alongside the need for Indigenous people to be “in the driving seat” of development processes for their people and land, particularly if participatory development is the preferred mode (Eversole 2004). This paper, is consciously attempting to provide new perspectives for regional science, considers the scholarship from studies which draw from anthropology, sociology, geography, communications and postcolonial artistic endeavour to explore the reclaiming of culture.

In “Reclaiming Culture: Indigenous People and Self Representation”, Joy Hendry says of Indigenous people:

These are the people who are concerned with recording and displaying their cultural difference, not as a salvage exercise, but as a blueprint for the future of their descendants. They are people actively involved in dismissing and dismantling the way they have been portrayed as extinct, or peoples of the past, perhaps merely offering historical or archaeological colour to the nation that exhibits them. Instead

they are building constructions of their own cultural identity as part of the ongoing education of their children (2005:4).

Hendry in her Note on Spelling and Terminology reflects on the use of capital letters for the terms Aboriginal, First Nations, Indigenous and Native. We accept her view that part of the process we are discussing is that “people around the world are regaining pride in the Aboriginal/Native status” and our use of the words is in discussion of development, not in any pejorative sense that may have applied in the past. Hendry’s research visits many sites where First People are reclaiming their culture and demonstrates the view that “culture is the basis for an identity, without [which] one is lost” (Mary Jamison, Mohawk, ‘For us to decide’ quoted in Hendry 2005:81). Hendry’s contention is that Indigenous People cannot proceed with development until they “establish ... an identity for themselves, and that a demonstration of their existence is primary to ... further action”. What is interesting to note in consideration of regional development, is that the sale of artefacts of cultural heritage as art and the creation of Indigenous art is regarded positively as part of the economic development of Indigenous people. But, for the Indigenous People and those supporting their development, the art and cultural heritage are also part of the development of self esteem and pride (Hendry 2005) as well as the creation of a persuasive tool to convince the mainstream of the value of their heritage (Morphy 2005:23-24). As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1998: 64) note:

As well as direct and indirect economic control, the continuing influence of Eurocentric cultural models privileged the imported over the indigenous: colonial languages over local languages; writing over orality and linguistic culture over inscriptive cultures of other kinds (dance, graphic arts,) which had often been designated ‘folk culture’ (64).

The reclamation of cultural heritage works in two ways: firstly to foster development of First Peoples’ sense of their own identity and value, and secondly, to position them as significant voices that must be addressed in the halls of government.

### **Inuit History: an example of colonisation and the marginalising of Indigenous heritage**

The Inuit of the Arctic have experienced one of the most rapid and radical colonization processes the world has ever seen. They have been “described by the United Nations as a people who refuse to disappear,” as John Amagoalik (1981: 165) notes in Robin Gedalof’s collection of Inuit writing entitled *Paper Stays Put*. The Inuit people of the Arctic have a commonality of language, traditional stories, and ways of



doing and thinking, despite being spread across some six thousand kilometres of frozen coastline and divided broadly into eight cultural groups. Their traditional lands span the modern nation-states of Canada, the United States, Russian Siberia and Greenland.

Because of the harsh nature of the environment and an absence of apparent saleable resources, concerted attempts at colonizing the Arctic have only occurred in relatively recent history. As historian Shelagh Grant (2002:16) notes, there was

no official Inuit policy ... until after the Second World War. Although recognized as 'Natives,' the Inuit were not included in the Indian Act, nor was legislation passed making them wards of the federal government. As a consequence, they were technically fully-fledged Canadian citizens without any privileges—no access to health or educational services, and no vote. As residents of the Northwest Territories, they fell under the general authority of the Department of the Interior until 1924, when the responsibility for Inuit policy was temporarily transferred to the Department of Indian Affairs by an amendment to a sub-section of the Indian Act. The RCMP was mandated to supervise their health and welfare in the field.

The prime motivation of the Canadian government in finally moving to colonise the area was to maintain border controls. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Canadian government took steps to protect their claim on the Arctic North as the number of foreign exploratory parties from Denmark and the United States were deployed. These were seen as potential threats to continued Canadian sovereignty of the area, and to this end, the first Royal Canadian Mounted Police post was established at Fullerton Harbour, with a number following during the 1920s. Land which had previously been considered “uninhabited” could be subject to a claim by explorers or military personnel from other countries. Consequently it became important to mobilise the existing inhabitants of the Arctic, who had previously been left to their own devices (Grant, 2002:24-31). With these concerted attempts at colonization from the South came the attempted banning of the Indigenous language and forced acquisition of Western culture. As with other Indigenous peoples, some Inuit who came into contact with early colonizers suffered other extraordinary indignities, including having their pictures published in anthropological works without their permission, and, as had been the case during the time of the whalers, being removed from their homelands and displayed as curiosities to the outside world.<sup>1</sup>

The next generation would face further disruption. After World War II and epidemics of tuberculosis, measles and smallpox decimating camps throughout the Arctic, the

---

<sup>1</sup> See D'Anglure in Robinson and in Lutz, among others, for further historical information on this phenomenon.

government enacted a policy of mass relocation of Inuit families into permanent settlements. Small low-rent “matchbox houses” were constructed by the government. The houses were poorly insulated, difficult to maintain, and often overcrowded.

As part of the resettlement process in the 1950s, each person was designated a number, according to their district of birth. This, in the eyes of government officials, took the place of a name, since the Inuit method of naming children after relatives, regardless of gender, was deemed “too confusing” (Wachowich, 1999:130). The identification disk system would remain in place until Project Surname was implemented in the late 1960s, at the suggestion of the Inuit themselves (Wachowich, 1999:132, Petrone, 1997:140, Olsen, 1997:185).

In the face of government failure to understand or even recognise Inuit heritage, it was difficult for individuals to maintain a strong connection with their land and forebears. Children were a major focus of the relocation process, as educating the young in “civilized” ways was believed to be integral to promoting mass cultural change. After the Second World War, Inuit-only residential schools were established in Chesterfield Inlet and Churchill (Wachowich in Robinson, 2004:135). Previously, Inuit children had been removed from their homes and housed in residential or industrial schools in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec with other Indigenous children from various First Nations (Milloy, 1999:239).

These events coincided with what would become five or six decades of government intervention into Inuit life. As John Bennett and Susan Rowley (2004:xxvii) have noted,

In the past, Inuit history was transmitted orally from generation to generation. The fundamental changes in Inuit life since the 1950s—schools, wage employment, and the move to permanent communities—badly damaged this chain of transmission.

Canada, like many other postcolonial nations, including Australia, is currently dealing with the political ramifications of its history of the forced removal of children from their families, familial spaces, and heritage. Indigenous peoples became the disempowered, the unemployed, the undervalued and the lost at the same time as the links to their heritage were severed and blurred.

### **Cultural heritage as part of the development process**

Colonial experiences such as these marginalised the heritage of First Peoples. If the values of the colonisers are the primary way of viewing the world then even where the Indigenous heritage is remembered or lived it is on edges or borders of the mainstream *weltanschauung*. It is understood that the world has moved on. There can be no return to the world as it was before colonial intervention. However, it is imperative that Indigenous peoples acknowledge their traditional ways of doing and thinking and develop their sense of place and identity in the world. This is echoed across the world in the experience of colonised lands. Consider for example research revealing Maori people's need for a holistic development framework underpinned by

1. economic development oriented to the general well-being of the whole tribe,
2. empowerment through participatory development processes and
3. the "strengthening of the identity and self worth of individuals" (Loomis & Mahima 2003:399). In a similar example from the United States, work with the Yavapi-Apache Nation concludes that "Through the arts and language revitalisation, the tribe will revive some of its cultural distinctiveness and thereby contribute to the community pride" (Piner & Paradis 2004:82).

Heritage is often expressed through culture and the arts, as a manifestation of a community's sense of its tradition and ongoing identity into the future. Thus, the celebrations, stories, dances, objects of art and of living, ways of doing every day life, buildings and their design, the knowings of the community: all those elements which express heritage and tell the tale of the people and their place provide a continuum from the past into the present and beyond. They become tools for the empowerment of the colonised people in asserting their needs and rights. Indeed, in Australia, Morphy (2005:24) suggests "Artists from north-east Arnhem Land have ... used art routinely in non-commercial contexts as an instrument of persuasion". This use of art to assert cultural values and petition for rights can only occur where the colonial gaze is rejected or at least modified and the Indigenous heritage and attendant rights celebrated. Such reclamation of culture and heritage is the first step towards development.

### **The Artist's role in Indigenous Cultural Development**

Artists, as expressers of a community's sense of itself, as interpreters of the heritage and culture of a people, present the experiences of the community in place and time. Artists' work reflects experience in the world and both challenges and reifies the perception of the experience. Where artists themselves are outside the mainstream, disengaged from the mainstream culture, their work may express the disengagement or it may express and celebrate their historical cultural values or some combination of the two. Art, in whatever form or genre, provides a way of coming to an understanding of the world or some part thereof. The role of the artist is as recorder of the world, holding a mirror to celebrate the culture. At the same time, the artist in representing an individual perception challenges others perceptions and interpretations of that world. Much Indigenous artistic and cultural endeavour seeks to save and savour the heritage of the Indigenous culture. At the same time, the relationship of artists and culture to shamans, knowledge seekers, priests and other interpreters of the ways of the world, means they have a role in developing inspiration and leadership towards development in the community through representation.

Morphy (2005:26) argues that "just as art can play a significant role in the transformation of Aboriginal society, the production of art for sale can simultaneously play a significant role in maintaining cultural continuity". The sale provides economic and symbolic value which impacts on mainstream and indigenous perception of the Indigenous heritage and its value. The sale of art, however, can also be problematic when administered by agencies of the mainstream government, as the Inuit example attests. Since the 1950s Inuit printmaking and soapstone culture has become famous in southern Canada. Yet, as Ipellie argues, the process of selecting the art for sale quickly became another tool of colonial power:

... in the beginning it was all about experimenting with the art that came out from the peoples, from the community. And they would do prints and stone-cuts from those drawings. And they would line up the pieces along the wall and they had so-called Eskimo Arts Council, who would every year, after the prints came out, judge the best-looking prints that they could see, that they thought could sell in the South. And they selected those, kept them; others, they ripped them up. They were gone. They weren't going to be sold to anyone. And that's how it began, and it's been that way ever since. These days, it still happens. I mean, for me, as an artist [mimes ripping something up], I can understand that. I could do it myself if a piece didn't look good enough to sell... But to have a whole council behind my work, and deciding which is good and which is bad? Why is it still happening? And the artists themselves don't really have any control over how the final product ends, because the Co-operative select all the colouring (Ipellie interview with McMahon-Coleman 2005b).

Despite these problems of authority, however, the sale of Inuit art did lead to a greater understanding and presence of Inuit culture in Southern Canada. As Ipellie notes, “select—Inuit printmakers ...have become very famous for that reason.” The lesson from the anecdotal evidence presented here seems to be that the artists must retain artistic control over their own work, rather than being disempowered when it is afforded a commercial value. Certainly more recent artistic endeavours, including the production of Inuit films like the award-winning *Atanarjuat—the Fast Runner*, have sought to maintain Inuit control over Inuit cultural production. This parallels the calls for Indigenous control of economic development in other Indigenous cultures (Loomis & Mahima 2003, Eversole 2004, Piner & Paradis 2004, Austin-Broos & Macdonald 2005, Morphy 2005).

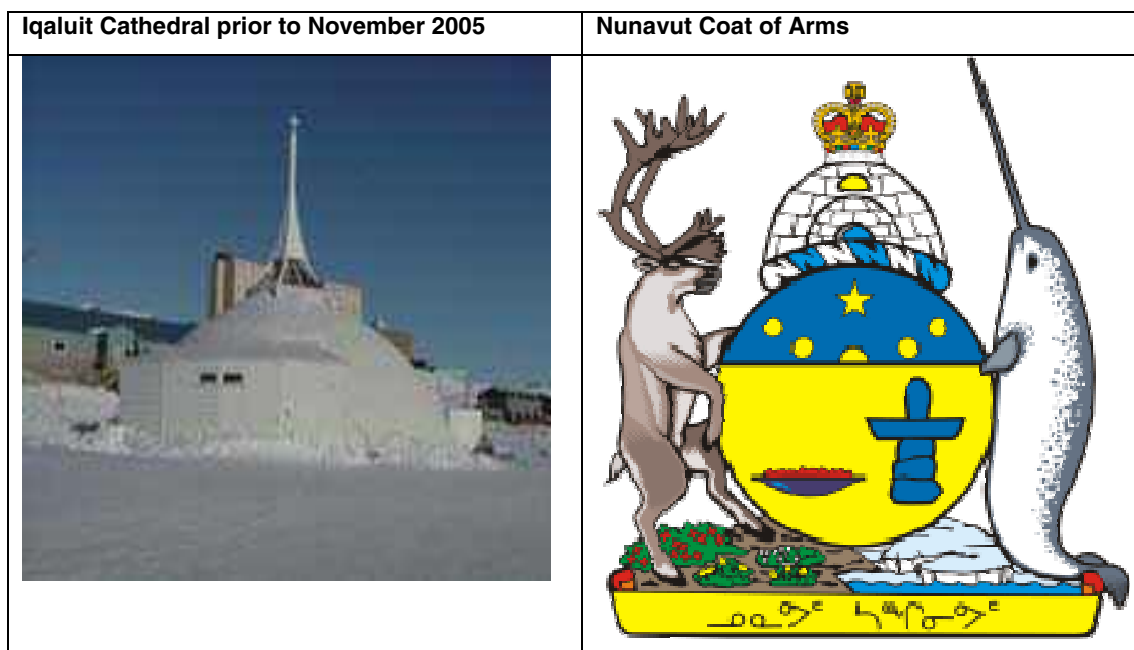
The connection of art to many aspects of Indigenous society means it is a tool for regeneration at a number of levels, valued by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Fostering the development of such art and artists can be a step in empowering Indigenous development but control needs to be maintained by the Indigenous people.

### **Inuit Cultural Resurgence**

The Inuit, who have experienced unprecedented cultural upheaval as a result of their rapid and recent colonisation, have, over the past thirty years, experienced a cultural resurgence. This has been reflected in the renewed production of Inuit art and crafts and in the development of television and films. The political corollary of this artistic activity was the 1999 establishment of the territory of Nunavut. Community leaders—many of whom had been removed from their communities as children—successfully lobbied for the formal establishment of a homeland within the borders of Canada. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or national Inuit organisation, was largely responsible for this political movement. Similar lobbying has also seen the establishment of Inuktitut educational materials and television broadcasts. These are used to ensure the survival of Inuktitut and Inuit culture in the face of the all-pervasive languages and cultures of the colonisers. The Inuit have reclaimed control of the heritage and this control is evidenced in many cultural representations (Hendry 2004, 2005:163-172).

It is important to note that Eversole’s (2004) critique of current forms of participatory development’s doing to, for or with communities or regions or Indigenous peoples is

based in the notion that real consultation should occur in planning development. Such consultation presumes a sense of worth and value is inherent in how the Indigenous people view themselves. Engagement with development processes will only occur where the Indigenous people have a voice and a perception that their way of seeing is valuable, indeed enriching. To return to the Inuit example, one has only to look at the igloo shape of the Iqaluit cathedral and to hear of the seating arrangements and symbolic representation of Inuit heritage in the Legislative Assembly building to develop a sense of finding a meeting place of the mainstream national (colonial) culture and the traditional world of the Inuit (Hendry, 2004:163-172). Art thus provides a symbolic representation of the development. Artists have a role as interpreters of culture in the fostering of pride and of ways of doing which inform the development process in the region using heritage as a tool in driving development.

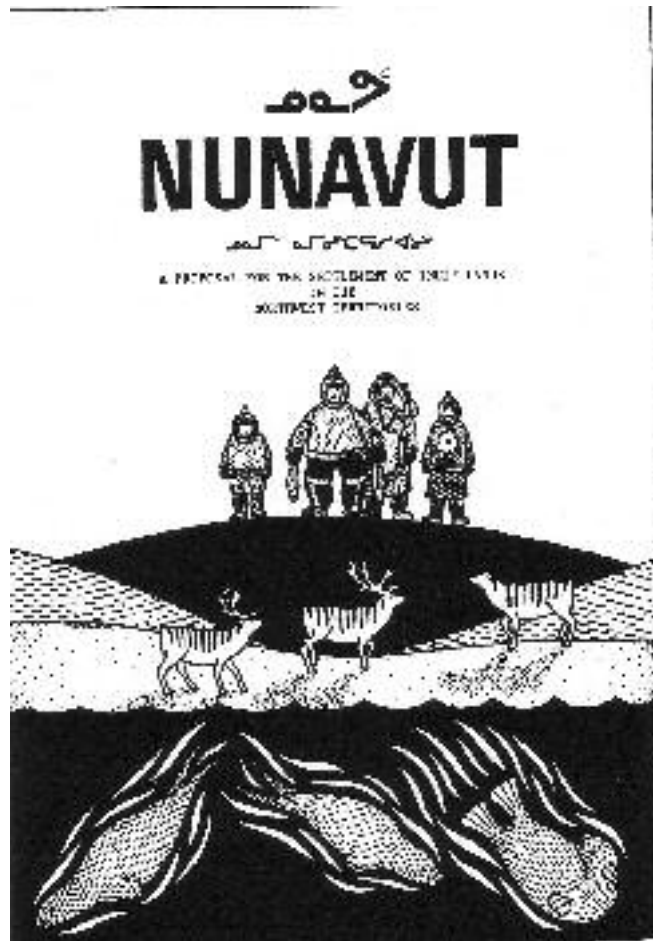


### Case Study—Alootook Ipellie & Nunavut

These interrelated concepts of heritage, identity and region can be usefully explored through the work of the Inuk artist and writer, Alootook Ipellie. Ipellie's literature is a literature of cultural pride and of resistance to dispossession and to artistic regulation. In the context of a half-century of European intervention and dispossession, it is little

wonder that Ipellie has chosen to focus his work on figures that mediate complex and conflicting worlds. Ipellie's work deals with the conflicts and confluences between traditional spirituality and Christianity. His art and literature typically fuse figures from his Indigenous heritage with those from the mainstream literature, culture and religion. Ipellie primarily negotiates this space between worlds through the use of shamanistic trickster figures. Ipellie, as a writer and activist, is concerned with presenting his culture as a living, developing entity; not a quaint and archaic culture which needs to be partially preserved or relegated to museums of anthropology. The characters he creates have access to, and power from, the body of wisdom necessary for survival in the Arctic, as well as that of the dominant culture.

Through Ipellie's work as a translator, illustrator, cartoonist, journalist, and, ultimately, editor for the Indigenous magazines *Inuit Monthly*, *Inuit* and the *Nunavut Newsletter*, he was heavily involved in the Inuit cultural resurgence of the 1980s and 1990s. During this period he worked for the Tugavik Federation of Nunavut, the organisation responsible for the creation of the Nunavut territory and government on April 1, 1999. The experience of Inuit in Nunavut provides an interesting consideration of successful development processes and the relationship of the artist and of culture in sparking development. With an area spanning two million square kilometres of northern Canada ("Government of Nunavut," 1), it represents the largest land claim settlement in Canadian history (Polar Net, 1). The official website of Nunavut boasts that the territory has been "[f]or millennia a major Inuit homeland ... today is a growing society that blends the strength of its deep Inuit roots and traditions with a new spirit of diversity" ("Government of Nunavut," 1). Interestingly, it is an Ipellie drawing which provides symbolic decoration for the cover of the Nunavut Lands Claim Proposal witnessing the joining of Ipellie's activism and art in the assertion of Inuit heritage.



Cover of the Nunavut Land Claims Proposal, as drawn by Alootook Ipellie

Certainly Ipellie's work exemplifies this notion of a blended culture. His stories, cartoons and artwork often depict figures from Euro-Canadian mainstream culture alongside those from the Inuit tradition. In particular, he is critical of the influx of British culture, and this is examined in his early cartoons, as well as in a number of the stories included in his 1993 collection, *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*.







The British monarchy is also critiqued in “The Agony and the Ecstasy,” an illustrated short story published in Ipellie’s collection of twenty such pieces. Ipellie has cited it as an example of how his stories contain

elements of the two cultures, clashing together ... For instance, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, the story about Pilipoosie and the Queen. You know Prince Edward? At one time there was a rumour that, uh... That he was gay, eh? So I came up with that idea, in the story about the gay son, but instead of calling him Prince Edward [he is called Prince Char<sup>2</sup>] ... Pilipoosie is Prince Phillip, and Queen Elisapee is the mother. I had great fun with that one (McMahon-Coleman, 85-6).

The story chronicles the tribulations of the elderly Prince Pilipoosie as he tries in vain to teach his eldest son how to hunt, but is thwarted by his son’s preference for dressing up in his mother’s clothes. When Char finally kills his first seal, his parents are ecstatic that their son is now a man, despite Char’s agonised protests that he was “born to be a homebody” (Ipellie, 167). The story critiques the privileging of imported British colonial heritage, particularly through questioning notions of leadership based on heredity, rather than skill, and also depicting traditional Inuit hunting methods in details. It seems significant, then, that when Ipellie first pitched the idea of a book based on his drawings to the editor of Theytus Press in 1990, they

<sup>2</sup> A char is a fish, Native to the Arctic, and a staple part of the traditional Inuit diet.

were not interested. As the cultural resurgence continued and the establishment of Nunavut edged closer to becoming a reality, Theytus contacted Ipellie again.

Two years pass, and nothing. I hear nothing. One day I get a phone call. Remember those drawings? That book idea you mentioned two years ago? We would like to publish it." So I had like a three-month deadline (McMahon-Coleman, 2005a:85).

The process of completing and publishing the book, the first single-authored anthology of stories by an Inuk, coincided with the ratification of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in November 1992, it being signed by the Prime Minister on May 23, 1993, and finally being passed by the Canadian Parliament in June of that year ("Nunavut Land Claim Overview"). Under Article 23 of the Agreement, the workforce in the region is to "be representative of the population across all levels of government operations in Nunavut" ("Human Resources," 1), that is, that "Inuit are expected to fill about 85 percent of all jobs within the Government of Nunavut by 2020" (ibid). In practical terms, this means that the government has an obligation to significantly increase education and training opportunities, infrastructure and mineral exploration in the area over this timeframe ("The Economy," 1, "Human Resources" 1-2).

This fundamental recognition of the rights of the Inuit by the Canadian government gives the Inuit status as a group whose voice is effective in framing policy and governance. It creates a solution where the Inuit cultural heritage is no longer contested. While it is no immediate solution to the issues and challenges that face the Inuit, it at least frames their voice and their ways of seeing the world as significant in the government of their people and place. Developing this voice so that it is articulated effectively depends on the recognition and valuing of their Indigenous heritage. In this, the role of culture and art is significant. For the Inuit this voice gives them a space to negotiate their development. Such recognition and such voice is not available to all Indigenous peoples across the world. Indeed, Indigenous voices continue to be marginalised voices often contested by the issue of authenticity. We concur with Lawrence and Adams (2005) in their identification that

the core issues which Howitt identified then [1996] remain relevant today: First, indigenous status is not uncomplicated. Second, it is partly in the contested nature of 'indigeness' that disputes arise. Third, disputes are often prompted by competition, conflicts and contradictions in resource claims between 'national' and 'indigenous' interests. Fourth, Indigenous status is thereby an inherently political issue, notably in the sense that it inherently entails claim to certain rights over the use, management and flow of benefits from resource-based industries(2).

## **Conclusion: Ownership**

What we have documented here in the example of the Inuit in Canada's Arctic is a confluence between political autonomy and cultural resurgence leading to economic development in a region. Our thesis is that only when these branches meet and Indigenous stakeholders, as well as the general population, feel that they have appropriate ownership of cultural production and regional development will we see heritage as a driver of development for indigenous communities.

Addressing the issues of value and of identity is critical to make this kind of development where there is significant evidence of disadvantage and disempowerment. But it is also the case that for positive benefit to flow from Indigenous understandings of the world, there needs to be a collaborative approach to development such that a negotiated space can be created. This presumes that the Indigenous people have a voice which will be heard by the mainstream and we argue that there is a role in the development of art and artists that assists in fostering this voice.

## **Suggestions arising**

- We suggest that to enhance this fostering, there needs to be government policy to support artistic development and endeavour as a means of fostering pride in indigenous heritage, sense of identity and to explore old ways of knowing and doing.
- We suggest also that this needs to be sought with awareness that there is a double edged sword regarding the issues of authenticity and ownership of the cultural product but that moves to re-establish traditional knowledge and practice are central to development processes.
- We suggest that there needs to be research with and by Indigenous people to explore the reclamation of culture and how it links to regional development processes but that there remains the possibility that traditional ways of doing and knowing can inform modern process and practice in the management of people and the land.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amagoalik, John, circa 1981, "We Must Have Dreams," in Gedalof, Robin (ed) *Paper Stays Put: A Collection of Inuit Writing*. Hurtig, Edmonton.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth & Tiffin, Helen, 1998, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, Routledge, London.
- Austin-Broos, Diane & Macdonald, Gaynor (eds) 2005, *Culture, Economy and Governance in Aboriginal Australia: Proceedings of a Workshop of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia held at the University of Sydney 30 Nov-1 Dec 2004*, University of Sydney, Sydney.
- Behrendt, Larissa, 2005, 'False Dichotomies and Other Barriers to Policy-Making for Aboriginal Communities', in *Culture, Economy and Governance in Aboriginal Australia: Proceedings of a Workshop of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia held at the University of Sydney 30 Nov-1 Dec 2004*, University of Sydney, Sydney, pp.231-239.
- Bennett, John & Rowley, Susan (eds) 2004, *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston.
- Blakely, E., 2004, Regional Science Cyclops – From a One Eye to a Two Eyed View of a Changing Regional Science World, Keynote Address at the 2004 Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Conference, *The Regional Development Cocktail: Shaken Not Stirred*, Wollongong, September 28 to October 1, 2004
- Collins, Robbie, 2005, "Leadership, network facilitation and regional development: critical reflection as a tool for insight???" Conference Paper for *The Lord of the Regions: Myths, Magic and Mix of Regional Development 29<sup>th</sup> Conference of Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Association International Incorporated*, Manukau, New Zealand, September 2005
- Daly, Anne & Smith, Diane, 2003, "Reproducing exclusion or inclusion? The socioeconomic status of Indigenous Australian children", Abstract, *Australian Social Policy Conference, Theme: Social Inclusion*, University of New South Wales 9-11 July 2003 Accessed 16/08/2006 at <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/ASPC2003/>
- Craik, Jennifer, McAllister & Davis, Glyn 2003, "Paradoxes and Contradictions in Government Approaches to Contemporary Cultural Policy: An Australian Perspective" *The International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp.17-33.
- Eversole, Robyn, 2004, 'Doing to, Doing for, Doing With and Beyond: The Development Recipe Book Aflame?' Paper presented at *Australian New Regional Science Association International Conference 2004, The Regional Development Cocktail – Shaken Not Stirred*, Wollongong NSW, pp.433-444.

- Elisapie, Isaac (Dir) 2003, *If the Weather Permits*, National Film Board of Canada, Canada.
- Fire in the Cathedral* [Online] Available: <http://arctic.anglican.org/Cathedral> [Accessed 2006, Aug. 14].
- Government of Nunavut Fact Sheet, *Economy* [Online]  
Available: [www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/eco.pdf](http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/eco.pdf) [Accessed 2006, Aug. 1]
- Grant, Shelagh, 2002, *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal.
- Government of Nunavut Fact Sheet. (no date) *Human Resources* [Online]  
Available: [www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/hr.pdf](http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/hr.pdf) [Accessed 2006, Aug. 1]
- Hendry, Joy, 2005, *Reclaiming Culture: Indigenous People and Self-Representation*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Ipellie, Alootook, 1993, *Arctic Dreams and Nightmare*, Theytus, Penicton.
- Ipellie, Alootook, 1981, 'Close Encounters' (Cartoon) *Inuit Today*, Inuit Tapirisat Kanatami, Ottawa.
- Iqaluit Cathedral Photo from <http://arctic.anglican.org/Cathedral> accessed 14/08/2006
- Land Claim Overview, [online] (no date)  
Available: <http://www.npc.nunavut.ca/eng/nunavut/claim.html> [Accessed 2006, Aug. 1].
- Loomis, Terence & Mahima, John, 2003, "Research Round-up: Māori community-based sustainable development: a research progress report", *Development in Practice*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp 399-413.
- Lutz, Hartmut, (2005) Transl. with Alootook Ipellie and Hans-Ludwig Blohm, *The Diary of ABRAHAM ULRİKAB*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.
- McMahon-Coleman, Kimberley, 2005a, 'Interview with Alootook Ipellie', *Australasian-Canadian Studies—Minorities and Cultural Assertions*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 77-89.
- McMahon-Coleman, Kimberley, 2005b, *Interview with Alootook Ipellie*, (Unpublished) Vancouver.
- Milloy, John S, 1999, *A National Crime—the Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879-1986*. Manitoba Studies in Native History XI, University of Manitoba Press, Manitoba.
- Morphy, Howard, 2005, 'Indigenous Art as Economy' in Austin-Broos, Diane & Macdonald, Gaynor (eds) 2005, 'Culture, Economy and Governance in Aboriginal Australia' *Proceedings of a Workshop of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia held at the University of Sydney 30 Nov-1 Dec 2004*, University of Sydney, Sydney, pp. 19-27.

*Nunavut Coat of Arms* [Online] (no date)

Available: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/symbols.shtml>  
[Accessed 2006, Aug. 14].

Olsen, Eric P, 1997, 'Grounded on Ice: The Inuit Struggle to Preserve their Values', *The World and I*, vol. 12, [Online]

Available: <http://www.elibrary.com/s/edumarkau/getd> [Accessed 2000, March 12].

*Our Land: Government of Nunavut Fact Sheet* [Online] (no date)

Available: [www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/ourlands.pdf](http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/about/ourlands.pdf) [Accessed 2006, Aug. 1].

Petrone, Penny (ed) 1997, *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Piner, Judie M & Paradis, Thomas W, 2004, "Beyond the Casino: Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Development on Native American Lands" *Tourism Geographies*. vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 80-98.

Polarnet, *Welcome to Nunavut* [Online] (no date)

Available: <http://www.polarnet.ca/polarnet/nunavut.htm> [Accessed 2006, Aug, 1].

Robinson, Gillian, (2004) *Isuma Inuit Studies Reader*, Montreal: Isuma Publishing

UNESCO. 2002. [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity](http://www.unesco.org/education/imld_2002/universal_decla.shtml#2), accessed 14/08/2006 at [http://www.unesco.org/education/imld\\_2002/universal\\_decla.shtml#2](http://www.unesco.org/education/imld_2002/universal_decla.shtml#2).

Wachowich, Nancy., Agalakti Awa, Apphiah., Kaujak Katsak, Rhoda & Pikujak Katsak, Sandra, 1999, *Saquiyuq: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal.